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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2007

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MEXICAN NATIONAL SENTENCED TO OVER 16 YEARS FOR METHAMPHETAMINE CONSPIRACY

Aguilera-Mendoza Led Major Meth Supply Pipeline

PHOENIX – Jose Aguilera-Mendoza, 29, of Mexico, was sentenced on June 22 to 200 months in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Martone. DEA Phoenix Field Division agents arrested Aguilera-Mendoza on May 18, 2006. On March 7 of this year, Aguilera-Mendoza pleaded guilty to the charge of Conspiracy To Possess with Intent to Distribute Methamphetamine, a Class A felony, after two days of trial.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona Daniel Knauss stated, “Aguilera-Mendoza was a major distributor of methamphetamine. I want to thank the DEA and the City of El Mirage Police Department for their outstanding investigative work which lay behind this successful prosecution.”

Aguilera-Mendoza was a leader and primary source of supply in a substantial methamphetamine organization that imported the drug from Mexico to the Phoenix area and then distributed it throughout the United States. Aguilera-Mendoza pleaded guilty to transactions involving 7-10 pounds of methamphetamine. Testimony and evidence at trial showed that the organization imported and distributed multiple pound quantities of methamphetamine to hundreds of clients across the United States from 2004 to 2006. Each pound of methamphetamine contains thousands of individual doses when broken down for personal use.

DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge Douglas W. Hebert said, “The Aguilera-Mendoza organization controlled a pipeline of methamphetamine operating from Sinaloa, Mexico to states as far east as Kansas. These drug traffickers poisoned too many of our neighborhoods, and DEA will not relent until our streets are safe and these criminals are behind bars.”

According to the DEA, Arizona is a primary transshipment point for Mexican methamphetamine smuggled across the Southwest border. The highly addictive drug is often associated with many other crimes, including domestic abuse, child neglect, burglary, auto theft and identity theft.

As a result of the overwhelming evidence presented in this case, Aguilera-Mendoza entered a guilty plea on the second day of his trial. While Aguilera-Mendoza did not have any prior criminal convictions, his 200 month sentence reflects his role as a primary supplier and organizer in the methamphetamine conspiracy.

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This case was the result of an extensive investigation led by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in Arizona and Alabama. The City of El Mirage Police Department also played a key role in the investigation. The prosecution was handled by Brian G. Larson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-00314-PHX-FJM
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-153(Aguilera-Mendoza)

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